The year 2018 marks Dalhousie University’s Bicentennial Anniversary. We proudly celebrate 200 years of the leadership, inspiration and impact that characterizes our rich history as one of Canada’s oldest universities. As we take this year to reflect on the past and to shape the plans that will move us into Dalhousie’s third century, we should note that 200 years of achievements aren’t ours alone to celebrate: they also belong to the city of Halifax, the province, the region, the country and beyond. Most of all, they belong to the students. As a Professor of Chemistry at Dalhousie my achievements are melded with those of students, and they constitute but a mere sliver within this bicentennial history. Yet when combined with those of colleagues and alumni we can gain a glimpse of every one of those 200 years. It’s exciting!

This has also been a moving year for me, during which I have celebrated two awards. I am extremely proud to be selected as the 2018 recipient of the Award for Excellence in Graduate Supervision at Dalhousie, and I am grateful to my graduate students, past and present, for collaborating with me such as to enable this achievement: their success is my success. I am likewise honoured to receive the 2018 Dalhousie Alumni Association Faculty Award of Excellence for Teaching. As a graduate supervisor in Chemistry, I am struck by the fact that excellence can be measured in countless ways. As graduate students base their scholarly work around research, they simultaneously juggle discovery, invention, codification, analysis and hypothesis. It is relatively easy to measure excellence if we use metrics such as publication rates and venues, yet gauging the impact and significance of our findings is much more nebulous. Beyond the use of yet more metrics, including those embodied within avenues such as the commercialization of an invention or the uptake of a new method into policy, measuring excellence remains elusive and personalised.

To me, excellence in graduate supervision centres around this personalisation of success. In striving to be an excellent supervisor, I use intense listening skills to discern why a trainee chose to pursue graduate school, why they decided to attend Dalhousie, rather than another institution, and why they selected my research group. With that knowledge in hand, I am better equipped to help each learner create a motivating training plan that matches strengths and frailties...
with a skill-developing journey to reach their career objectives. I believe that strong graduate supervision must facilitate bold research ideas, embrace flexibility, encourage learning and freedom, offer frank feedback and provide consistent ways to promote and congratulate.

As Dalhousie moves into its third century, an evolving supervisory approach must take into account trainees’ long-term goals and recognise that these increasingly won’t involve a career in academe. Thinking broadly, effective supervisors will value the riches that inclusivity and diversity bring to everyday actions and long-term aspirations. I believe that a supervisor’s role is to support transitions from students to scholars with careers. I am a mentor and a sponsor, encouraging each person to explore their dreams through empowering belief, a clear path and deliberate actions. If I can do this successfully in my research group, together we will produce and disseminate world-class chemical discoveries. That’s where my goals unite: it’s only with excellence in graduate supervision that my group can achieve excellence in research.

As we celebrate Dal200 and look to the future, it’s worth taking a moment to note that a good dose of humility goes a long way in a good supervisor too. It would be wise to acknowledge that we don’t do everything right and to realise that we each have the potential to trip up as often and as easily as everyone else.

Acknowledgements
With thanks to Nikki Comeau (Communications Officer, Faculty of Science) for content around Dal200. With heartfelt appreciation to Thompson group trainees 2001-2018 for their collaboration, integrity, hard work and willingness to help me learn.
In the summer of 2017, I proudly graduated with my bachelor’s degree in China. A few months later, I started my journey at Dalhousie University as a Master’s student. On the twelve-hour flight covering half the earth, numerous questions raced through my mind: What do universities look like in Canada? How does it feel to be part of a Canadian class? Will I be able to understand people and express myself? With all these questions in mind, I landed in Halifax with great excitement and uncertainty.

Soon enough, I realized that life as an international student was not as easy as I had anticipated. Being far away from home, I faced many challenges including a language barrier, cultural differences, and financial burden like never before. Beyond this, I sometimes felt “out of place” in the classroom. For example, students were often asked about the best strategy to address certain Canadian health care issues. As a newcomer to Canada, I had no local work experience and little knowledge about the Canadian health care system. Although I did have relevant experience from China, I was uncertain if people would be interested in a foreign perspective.

Through my personal communications with international students, many are experiencing these same feelings. It is a shame to see that the confident and brilliant minds from all over the world are not giving to and receiving the most from their learning experiences. According to Statistics Canada (2016), the number of international students is growing rapidly across all provinces, almost doubling in ten years. In Nova Scotia, universities will have to double the number of international students within the next three decades to prevent total enrolment rates from declining (Williams, 2013). In expecting the continued growth of international students, it is critical that universities shift the spotlight and encourage the sharing of global perspectives from this unique and diverse population of learners.

As an international student myself, I would encourage you to consider your experience in a Canadian classroom would mean so much to me. It would nurture a sense of self-worth, motivating me to work harder and give back to the class. Most of the time, the only thing international students need to step forward in class is a simple question like “Do you have similar issues at home?” or “How will you go about this in your home country?” In addition, we, as international students, may feel more equally represented in the classroom if authors and knowledge from a variety of backgrounds are included in teaching materials. Small changes like these can communicate the recognition of global perspectives in Canadian universities without burdening the instructor to make major changes to the current course content. If more international students can be made aware that their perspectives are welcomed and valued, it is conceivable that more of them will actively step into the spotlight and showcase their talents and experiences. Encouraging different voices in the world to be heard not only benefits international students but also enriches the learning experiences of domestic students as a way of deepening their understanding of different social and cultural contexts beyond Canadian classrooms, which is essential in the ever-changing globalized world today.

In keeping with the multicultural values of Canada, I believe that international students are critical to the success of Canadian higher education. To put this statement in perspective, “international students strengthen Canada’s schools, universities, and colleges, as well as Canadian communities in which they study and live, and they contribute to the quality of the educational experiences of all students in Canada” (Council of the Ministers of Education Canada, 2011, p. 14). With lived experiences of studying and working in other countries, international students are well positioned to enrich the learning experience for all by bringing diverse cultures, knowledge and perspectives to Canadian universities. In this way, the visibility of international students will enhance cross-cultural communications, which will in turn broaden the minds of all students, as well as create and strengthen new and existing connections across borders.

Similar to my own experience, a wealth of research has shown that a sense of self and place in the world is critical in the development of successful individuals living away from home (Poyrazli, Kavanaugh, Baker, & Al-Timimi, 2004; Ward & Searie, 1991). If Canada wants to attract and retain highly skilled global talents, encouraging the inclusion of global perspectives from international students is a good starting point. By shifting the spotlight to international students, Canadian universities will become more global-minded, enabling all students to understand, appreciate and work with people from diverse backgrounds, which is a core competency of competitive individuals in the 21st century. As an international student from China, I have always felt lucky for choosing Canada, and it is my sincere hope that this beautiful, equal and inclusive country, will benefit the same from my peers.

Shifting the Spotlight: The Inclusion of Global Perspectives from International Students

Ziwa Yu
MSc, Student, Nursing

References


WORKSHOP

Building Successful Academic Relationships Across Cultures

Scholars collaborate and teach across cultures throughout their academic careers. Join us to learn strategies for navigating cultural differences in communication styles, expectations, feedback and collaboration with your supervisors, peers and students or anyone with whom you work collaboratively across global and disciplinary cultures.

October 4, 2018
2:00 - 4:30 PM
MacDonald Building, University Hall

Register for this Event at dal.ca/CLT

Nanda Dimitrov, PhD
Director, Teaching Support Centre
Western University

This workshop is hosted in partnership through the Centre for Learning and Teaching and the Faculty of Graduate Studies at Dalhousie University.

References


Will the Definition of Success Change in the Future?: Diverting from Traditional Success

Since we were little kids, our knowledge and abilities have been quantified by numbers and letters. This is likely because our society has been shaped by "traditional measures" of success that have been present since the late 1900s – which typically emphasize academic excellence (such as grades) (Kuh et al., 2006). As we transitioned into the 21st century, we began to turn our eyes from quantifiable success to something abstract including independence, creativity, and individualism. In spite of these efforts, the definition of success has not gone through a dramatic change, and this is understandable because these "traditional measures" still remain applicable today. Will, then, the definition of success ever change? Yes, it must! But what definition of success should we aim for?

Although more and more educators acknowledge that a student’s success is multidimensional and individualized, such efforts are not sufficient to make a transition from the traditional definition (Hunter, 2008). Due to this, academic excellence is still a requirement for most scholarships and degrees. For example, admissions to post-secondary institutions, professional degrees, grants and scholarships are often heavily focused on students’ grades. I understand that there are limited spots and funds, but it would have been better if others who were more of a fit for the program had the chance to experience it instead of me. From this experience, I learned about three issues that occur around standards of success in higher education. The first is that I wasn’t well-informed on different opportunities that may have been better suited for me beyond my ability to be academically successful. In other words, post-secondary institutions should promote a variety of opportunities available to students successful. In other words, post-secondary institutions should promote a variety of opportunities available to students.

During this time, I realized the importance of being knowledgeable about various opportunities, such as volunteering, research projects, co-ops, or internships. The biggest advantage that can be gained from these is that they are real-world experiences, which aid in the development of employable skills. For example, let’s say that a student wants to become a researcher. For the student, having a summer research position would be an invaluable experience because what he/she learns in the lab can be translated into a real-world work environment. These opportunities provide skills that cannot be taught by books or in classrooms. If instructors acknowledge that students can become focused primarily on grades, then they can provide, or at least reiterate, the importance of out-of-class opportunities that can benefit the development of learners and guide students down various pathways for success (Alutu, 2006).

Putting emphasis on aspects other than academic excellence means rethinking how we assess learning and considering not solely focusing on traditional evaluations (midterms or exams). Although the current marking system has some advantages, having only one form of evaluation can be non-inclusive to learners who have various learning preferences. As educators, it is important to have an open-mind about learning and teaching, and we should consider how to creatively assess our students’ learning. In Bloom’s Taxonomy there are six levels of knowledge, and for each level there are different assessments that can be integrated into our teaching to provide alternative forms of assessment (Kratwolh, 2002). For example, letting students conduct a class allows the student to feel more responsible towards learning and can greatly improve communication—a skill useful for employment. The whole class can then give written feedback while the presenter completes a self-evaluation. In this way, an instructor can move away from numerical marks or traditional ways of thinking about success in the classroom, and yet still assess the learning that has taken place.

I’ve mentored several high school students and have found that not every student is going to university knowing exactly what they want to pursue. This means that many students decide on their career during post-secondary education, a time when they should be encouraged to reflect on themselves, their goals, and priorities. In the Teaching Assistant Enrichment Program (TAEP), we were asked to submit a reflection for each activity we completed. This was an excellent way for us to look back at what we learned and critically analyze how things could be improved, and offered us an experience with an alternative form of assessment. Even if reflection is not incorporated like this as an alternate way of assessment, if institutions or educators provide students moments to reflect on themselves and their work it could greatly benefit their personal development and encourage students to find the path that is most suitable for them.

I believe that developing the definition of success should not only be the student’s responsibility, but also the educator’s. It is our job as educators to ensure that students are benefitting from what they are learning. Because of traditional standards, students are often not given opportunities to look back or critically evaluate what they have learned. Therefore, degrees and courses should incorporate initiatives that encourage students to reach their own potential and prepare them as responsible, progressive, and creative learners (Wallace, 2016). Students should not feel discouraged for not meeting traditional standards of success but instead should broaden their horizons and explore their strengths and interests. Along with the efforts of educators and institutions, hopefully these little steps away from traditional measures will remain as a legacy for future generations – that success is discovering who you truly are, not just getting an A+.

References


Teaching Assistant Enrichment Program (TAEP)

Develop a broad set of skills and foundational knowledge to improve teaching confidence and effectiveness.

- Practice teaching and facilitating learning through reflective & professional practice and behaviours.
- Network with TAs from faculties across Dal.

This flexible program runs from September 2018 to May 2019.

Find Out More and Register at dal.ca/CLT

Min Joon Kim
MSc Student, Chemistry

I squeezed every penny out of my tuition dollars? toward building a successful business. Now ask yourself: have you’d be sure to make every penny spent go as far as possible What would you invest the money in? Training? Advertising? additional experience that will diversify your employability skills. professorship, but there’s a bounty of opportunity to gain same sector? Other businesses are your classmates, by the we’ve got nothing but time. To invest, however, you need a We have no money. But in the future value calculatory sense, spend the rest of our natural born lives in the ivory tower, we become professors. Tenure. Track. Professors. Lucky for us, this is precisely the profession that our PhD programs have trained us for. Unlucky for us, there are few of these jobs. And the ones there are have just been filled, and now there are none again. Truth be told, recent statistics have put the ratio of graduating PhDs to tenure track faculty hires at 1:4 [1], which is much larger than the ratio I had in mind when I decided to write this article (i.e., infinity:0). However, for the 75% us who will not spend the rest of our natural born lives in the ivory tower, we need to start investing. No, not in the financial sense. We can’t. We have no money. But in the future value calculatory sense, we’ve got nothing but time. To invest, however, you need a goal—or better yet, a business plan. What assets will your business need to be competitive with other businesses in the same sector? Other businesses are your classmates, by the way. It is one thing to come out of a PhD program equipped with the research and teaching skills necessary to land a coveted professorship, but there’s a bounty of opportunity to gain additional experience that will diversify your employability skills and help build your enterprise. Imagine for a moment that you spent all your tuition money, instead, on starting a business. What would you invest the money in? Training? Advertising? Infrastructure? Whatever it is, if you’re a savvy businessperson, you’d be sure to make every penny spent go as far as possible toward building a successful business. Now ask yourself: have I squeezed every penny out of my tuition dollars? Before looking at the aforementioned bounty of opportunity, there’s a checklist of resources that can orient you toward skills you may need to develop. One such resource, published by the Royal Bank of Canada [2], offers a comprehensive summary of what employers are (and will be) looking for. The report emphasizes “human skills”—skills like critical thinking, social perceptiveness, and complex problem solving—as well as “21st century skills”, such as digital fluency and cultural awareness. Depending on your field of study, you may already have some of these skills in spades, but perhaps they are discipline-specific, focussing on depth of knowledge rather than breadth. Having depth of knowledge will certainly serve us well in pursuit of the coveted professorship, but breadth of knowledge will make us adaptable for the broader workforce. In any case, I think we can agree that we won’t be exercising our social perceptiveness if we’re cooped up in our offices “doing analyses”. Whatever that means! So if you’ve established that there’s a bit of a disconnect between the skillset you’re currently developing and the ones you might need when entering the workforce, where can you go to expand your horizons? Over the past few years I’ve learned that you don’t have to go far! In my own case, my first extra-curricular opportunity was born of necessity—I needed money, so I got a job. I started working at the Dalhousie Writing Centre while pursuing my master’s degree, and I eventually developed an interest in pedagogy, particularly in writing for science. This experience got me working with students from across academic disciplines, years of study, and the world. Social perceptiveness? Boom. Cultural awareness? Boom. Digital fluency? Meow. I still can’t code, but I have yet to meet a margin I can’t format. I got the job I needed to help pay the bills, but along the way I developed a skillset that opened doors to further teaching opportunities, professional networks, and training opportunities. But perhaps jobs aren’t your thing. A couple of years back, a friend introduced me to a series of professional development workshops put on by Mitacs—a national not-for-profit social innovation company. One of the workshops focussed on business writing, and having never taken a business course, I thought it might come in handy when advising business students I encountered at the Writing Centre. The workshop was highly beneficial, opening my eyes to a completely different perspective on professional communication that I would not have seen through my PhD program. Other topics covered in Mitacs workshops include career professionalism, project management, cross-cultural communication, and networking [3]. These workshops are an excellent gateway to new knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs, they call them) that are paramount in the workforce, and workshops can be attended on-campus or online. Speaking of professional development, I should mention another in-house heavy-hitter—the Centre for Learning and Teaching. They’re going to publish this article, so if you’re reading it, there’s a good chance you’ll already know about them. What do they offer? Well, you can get a Certificate in University Teaching and Learning while you’re studying, for free! (4) Hmm… wasn’t this supposed to be about finding employment outside of the university? Indeed, but it’s mostly about building your personal brand and if you’re good, many universities outside of your enterprise, why not give yourself a head-start over your competitors? More often, universities are looking to hire folks with proven teaching experience, which is hard to come by looking through the barrel of a microscope that uses lasers. Besides, the certificate program hits on just about every one of the skills forwarded by the RBC, so you’ll be able to make use of them on whichever hills you run to. In sum, the future is uncertain, but you’d better be prepared. Don’t get left behind by your classmates. Get out there and pick up some new skills. At the very least you’ll gain some new perspectives and meet some great people. And if you do end up faithful to the ivory tower, you’ll be all the better prepared for it.

References

Preparation of the Way for a Career Outside the University, Inside the University

Sean Altikin, PhD (Candidate), Psychology Graduate Teaching Associate Centre for Learning and Teaching PhD (Candidate), Psychology Graduate Teaching Associate Centre for Learning and Teaching

PhD research should be done for the love of it. Graduate students are intellectuals; we like asking questions, we like reading and writing—we even like doing science. We like many things. But let’s be real: We wouldn’t be doing graduate research if there wasn’t some grand payoﬀ at the end of all the heavy lifting, would we?

To continue our loving pursuit of all things academic beyond graduate studies, we must become professors. Tenure. Track. Professors. Lucky for us, this is precisely the profession that our PhD programs have trained us for. Unlucky for us, there are few of these jobs. And the ones there are have just been ﬁlled, and now there are none again.

But perhaps jobs aren’t your thing. A couple of years back, a friend introduced me to a series of professional development workshops put on by Mitacs—a national not-for-proﬁt social innovation company. One of the workshops focussed on business writing, and having never taken a business course, I thought it might come in handy when advising business students I encountered at the Writing Centre. The workshop was highly beneﬁcial, opening my eyes to a completely different perspective on professional communication that I would not have seen through my PhD program. Other topics covered in Mitacs workshops include career professionalism, project management, cross-cultural communication, and networking [3]. These workshops are an excellent gateway to new knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs, they call them) that are paramount in the workforce, and workshops can be attended on-campus or online.

Speaking of professional development, I should mention another in-house heavy-hitter—the Centre for Learning and Teaching. They’re going to publish this article, so if you’re reading it, there’s a good chance you’ll already know about them. What do they offer? Well, you can get a Certificate in University Teaching and Learning while you’re studying, for free! (4) Hmmm... wasn’t this supposed to be about finding employment outside of the university? Indeed, but it’s mostly about building your personal brand and if you’re good, many universities outside of your enterprise, why not give yourself a head-start over your competitors? More often, universities are looking to hire folks with proven teaching experience, which is hard to come by looking through the barrel of a microscope that uses lasers. Besides, the certificate program hits on just about every one of the skills forwarded by the RBC, so you’ll be able to make use of them on whichever hills you run to. In sum, the future is uncertain, but you’d better be prepared. Don’t get left behind by your classmates. Get out there and pick up some new skills. At the very least you’ll gain some new perspectives and meet some great people. And if you do end up faithful to the ivory tower, you’ll be all the better prepared for it.

References

Dalhousie University Legacy Awards for Teaching

Congratulations to the 2018 Winners
Award for Excellence in Graduate Supervision Dr. Alison Thompson (Chemistry)
Contract and Limited-term Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching Gaza Ash (Chemistry)
Dalhousie Alumni Association Award of Excellence for Teaching Dr. Alison Thompson (Chemistry)
Educational Leadership Award Collaborative Teaching First Year Chemistry Program Teaching Team Dr. Angela Crane, Dr. Jennifer L. MacDonald, Dr. Mark Wall, Dr. Gianna Alemo, Dr. Joshua Bates, Dr. Heather Andreas, Dr. Mita Dasog, Dr. Aaron Kelly, Dr. Rory Chisholm, Dr. Marc Whalen

President’s Graduate Student Teaching Award Kristen Jones (Chemistry), Madeleine McKay (Health and Human Performance), Phillip Joy (Nutrition)

Sessional and Part-time Instructor Award for Excellence in Teaching Stuart Carson (Mathematics and Statistics)
There is Life Outside Academia: Looking at Alt-Ac Avensues after Grad School

Graduate school is seemingly an institution that seeks to help aspiring scholars define themselves. By selecting a faculty, a department, a program, a field, a thesis topic, and a supervisor, graduate students make a plethora of decisions that help define who they are within the academic sphere, even before graduating and potentially, pursuing an academic job. However, all of that work to define and narrow a student’s scope of focus no longer results in a streamlined outcome. A graduate degree does not mean tenure, or barring that, an academic job. As one might expect (since you normally need a Master’s degree to enroll in a doctoral program), increase in doctoral enrolments only increased about 2% in that time period. Typically, as one might expect (since you normally need a Master’s degree to enroll in a doctoral program), increase in doctoral enrolments happen one or more years later than increases in Master’s enrolments” (Looker, 2016, p. 11).

As the realm of academia moves toward more contract positions and fewer tenure-track opportunities, those entering into a Master’s or Doctorate program now are turning toward the ‘alt-ac’ sector for an alternative to the traditional academic job post-thesis defense. The term ‘alt-ac’ refers to ‘alternatives to academia’ and is a growing industry for graduate students who either cannot break into academia the way they anticipated, or no longer want to work within the academic system as a professor. Some of these ‘alt-ac’ positions still exist within the university framework (such as graduate administrators, librarians, alumni coordinators, student services staff, educational developers, teaching and learning staff, and resource technicians) and are all potential career paths for graduate students after they complete their degrees. Other students find themselves creating their own businesses, drawing upon the skills they developed in graduate school to make the process of writing, studying, or teaching easier for companies or individuals. But, ‘alt-ac’ and these other career paths come after grad school, so how can you know what direction you should take after you graduate when you’re still studying, researching, and devoting a great deal of your time to fitting into the traditional world of academia as smoothly as possible?

One way to figure out if ‘alt-ac’ might be for you is to at least put the option on the table. If you’re not aware that your graduate degree can make you fit for more than teaching or writing, then you’ll never consider options that might take you out of your comfort zone. Start off by simply taking stock of what you do and do not enjoy about graduate school. For instance, you might, during the duration of your Master’s or Doctorate, have the chance to tutor, lead a lab, or class. You might love teaching. You might love preparing slides, or developing essay questions, but, you might also find that the process of marking quizzes or tests is not something that you enjoy. So, what does that tell you? Perhaps, that teaching at the university level, in a lecture hall is not how you want to teach. Maybe you want to work as an independent educator or tutor. Maybe you’d be better off consulting with educators about their classes to make students more engaged rather than actually teaching those classes yourself. These experiences can also help open up doors to non-traditional opportunities in various places throughout the institution that is a university.

Theoretically, graduate school instills within you a variety of skills, among them, the ability to think critically, research well, write concisely, and present your findings in an accessible manner. These skills are transferable, and extremely useful outside of the academic sphere. If you spend four years examining the cultural relevance of three French medieval comic poems, you are an ideal candidate to help any company understand and explain the cultural relevance of a new product. The specialization aspect of graduate studies trains graduates to narrow their focuses and be concise as a default setting. Graduate students also exist in an environment where criticism is a constant, and the ability to take feedback and apply it to their own projects is a requirement for success. If you are considering launching your own business after grad school, persisting in the face of criticism and applying critical feedback properly are extremely important skills.

The pursuit of an ‘alt-ac’ career does not have to be a lonely endeavour either. A good place to start searching for ‘alt-ac’ careers that best serve your strengths is any social media platform, but specifically, Twitter where the altac hashtag is full of advice, entrepreneurs, and people within the industry who are forging careers that fulfil them, outside of the traditional academic path. To understand your own potential, you’ll want to see the ways that other people are maximizing theirs.

Aside from social media there are other ways to reach out and start forming a network within the ‘alt-ac’ community, which is useful whether you decide to pursue ‘alt-ac’ or not after graduation. Building a network is useful, because unlike academia where connections can be easily made due to institutional proximity or field specificity the ‘alt-ac’ world is full of so many different initiatives and backgrounds. The more connections you make, the more people you have who might test your products, give you advice, attend your conferences, or promote your business when it intersects with their own. Your ‘alt-ac’ network could help you to become a great business partner or an awesome graphic designer.

There are conferences and workshops cropping up throughout North America that are aimed at graduate students who are open to exploring their options. One such conference is Beyond the Professoriate, an online conference for PhDs considering non-academic jobs. Another place for you to make steps toward an ‘alt-ac’ is at academic conferences. Not only are there fellow scholars who just might be considering making the same leap you are there are also publishers at those events and there are keynote speakers who serve on editorial boards. There are also graduate students who have been made at events where you can talk about your research, but also highlight your other strengths in the same breath.

The ‘alt-ac’ career path is just that, an alternative to academia! It’s not better or worse than the academic job market, it’s just different. Sometimes you need something different to get you back on track doing what you love. So, open to alternatives, academic or not, because sometimes what you think you want isn’t what you need to feel fulfilled.

Works Cited


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Sam Lehman
BHums, MA
The Mutualism between Research and Teaching during Graduate Student Education

I will never forget the feeling of anticipation and excitement as I transitioned from an undergraduate to a graduate student in the Department of Biology at Dalhousie. The next chapter had begun as I entered a new frontier of independent study and innovation. A sentiment which I feel is shared among the graduate student community.

I remember meeting with the Graduate Coordinator at the start of my program to go over the logistics and requirements for the fulfillment of the degree: one of which was the teaching assistantship for two courses. We shared a laugh when I informed them that I had already completed this requirement during my undergraduate degree, four times over. I had discovered early that I possessed a passion for teaching and learning, and also how invaluable teaching experiences were during the pursuit of personal education.

Once my graduate program was underway, I continued to take on teaching assistantships within the department even though they weren’t a requirement. These included a wide range of courses, spanning all years of study and disciplines. My supervisor was supportive of my teaching endeavors, which empowered me to learn, grow, share my knowledge, and establish a marriage between my research and teaching. Teaching became a part of my everyday life and conversation throughout my studies. It was also great to have to be TA for the course my supervisor taught as this allowed us to share experiences and have her mentor me through teaching methods aimed at enhancing the students’ learning experience. My graduate research became an integral part of my teaching, combining elements of both teaching and research to investigate the scholarship of teaching and learning. It was an experience that encompassed the best of both worlds.

One of the main messages that I wish to emphasize is the importance in being a well-balance student. The personal development and growth we go through is only constrained by the limitations we set on our own opportunities. Teaching experiences are invaluable for our skillset as academics, and our research has equal potential to contribute to our teaching through our passion and inspiration. Both research and teaching, when combined into a single force, exponentially contribute to our potential as role models and mentors within the Dalhousie community. There are many important partnerships throughout a Graduate program. The relationship between you and your students, your supervisor, your peers and colleagues, the communicative dialogue between your studies and the public, and the shared learning that occurs between all of the relationships above. There is, however, one mutualistic relationship that I feel is often underestimated, and that is the invaluable collaboration between our research and teaching experiences in tandem, to ultimately achieve our full potential as an academic and inspire the future of higher education.

Creating a Teaching Dossier

For More Information and to Register for this FREE Workshop, Visit dal.ca/CLT

Presenter: Dr. Jill McSweeney

A teaching dossier is critical component for any academic job search, and yet we often do not consider the time and work it takes to develop a dossier that reflects the experiences, values, and evidence of our teaching. This two-part workshop covers the fundamentals of a teaching dossier (e.g., teaching philosophy, student evaluations, teaching materials), and will provide you with an opportunity to start developing the foundations in your own dossier.

During Day 1, you’ll receive information and resources for effectively presenting your teaching values, experiences, and evidence in a teaching dossier. The goal of Day 1 will be to present the role of a teaching dossier, it’s value to your future employment, and to begin to draft your own teaching philosophy.

Day Two

Thursday, November 8
10 a.m. - noon
8400, Killam Library

During Day 2, we will learn more about the individual components within a dossier and the evidence that you can start collecting that can represent your teaching practice and development. We will provide time to review a draft of your own teaching philosophy and start forming the foundation of your own dossier. Attendees are expected to bring a draft of a teaching philosophy to exchange with peers and receive feedback.
Looking to Add to your Co-Curricular Record?
Enroll in the Teaching and Learning Enrichment Program (TAEP) and receive a CCR annotation upon completion.

Emily Blacklock
Program: Marine Biology
Year: 2
Involvements: Dalhousie Sailing (Recreational Sailing Coordinator and Recreational Sailor), Dalhousie Masters Swimming (Swimmer and Executive Member), Dalhousie Marine Biology Society (Member), Dal Scuba (Member and Executive), Dal Kings Swim Society (VP of Womens Only Swimming and Member), and O’Week (Leader).

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For More Information, Contact:
Centre for Learning and Teaching
Dalhousie University
Killam Memorial Library, Suite G90
Email: clt@dal.ca Phone: (902) 494-1622
www.dal.ca/CLT

Fall 2018 Workshop Schedule
All Workshops are FREE
For More Information and Workshop Registration, Visit dal.ca/CLT

Enhancing Assessment and Feedback
Dr. Carol Evans, Chair, Higher Education University of Southampton
September 27 | noon-1:30 pm
B400, Killam Library

Supervising Across Cultures
Dr. Nanda Dimitrov, Western University
October 4 | 9:30 am - 12:00 pm
MacDonald Building, University Hall

Building Successful Academic Relationships Across Cultures
Dr. Nanda Dimitrov, Western University
October 4 | 2:00 - 4:30 pm
MacDonald Building, University Hall

Free Speech in the Classroom
Sean Aitken, PhD Candidate
October 4 | 3:00 - 4:30 pm
B400, Killam Library

Creating Learning Outcomes
Dr. Susan Joudrey & Chad O’Brien
October 11 | 11:30 am - 1 pm
8400, Killam Library

Exploring Heteronormativity in the Classroom: Towards Queer Inclusivity
Phillip Joy, PhD Candidate
October 22 | 10:00 - 11:30 am
8400, Killam Library

User Experience Considerations for Delivering Online Content
Sean Aitken, PhD Candidate
October 24 | 2:00 - 4:00 pm
8400, Killam Library

Can Findings from Educational Neuroscience Inform Our Teaching Practices?
Sean Aitken, PhD Candidate
November 27 | 2:00 - 4:00 pm
8400, Killam Library

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Enroll in the Teaching and Learning Enrichment Program (TAEP) and receive a CCR annotation upon completion.
Atlantic Universities’ Teaching Showcase 2018

Engaging Learners through Experiential and High Impact Practices in Higher Education

Saturday, October 20, 2018
Haley Institute
Dalhousie Agricultural Campus
Truro, Nova Scotia

Register at dal.ca/CLT